

Tom Horne
Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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HORNE VOWS TO FIGHT FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL RULING

DISAGREES WITH U.S. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OPINION THAT FOR-PROFIT CHARTER SCHOOLS INELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE CERTAIN FEDERAL FUNDS

(PHOENIX) November 21, 2003 – Arizona’s schools chief Tom Horne says the Arizona Department of Education will appeal a ruling by the U.S. Department of Education requiring that \$1,129,006 in federal funds provided to charter schools run by for-profit entities be returned to the federal government.

“The federal argument that charter schools operated by for-profit entities are not public schools is indefensible,” Horne said. “Under Arizona law, there is absolutely no distinction made between non-profit and for-profit charter schools; both are public schools and therefore eligible for public funding. This ruling will be appealed.”

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General has released a Final Audit Report contending that 20 for-profit Arizona charter school operators were not entitled to receive a total combined \$1,129,006 in monies appropriated for low income Title I as well as special education programs between October of 2000 and September, 2001. The report calls for the State of Arizona to refund the money to the federal government.

“The federal government has decided to ignore Arizona law in this matter, and I believe that to be erroneous. I strongly disagree with the opinion of the Inspector General’s office. I intend to exhaust every avenue of appeal available to me as state schools Superintendent. Under Arizona law both for-profit and non-profit charter schools are “public schools,” and therefore eligible for Title I and special education programs.”

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